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AUTHOR Wardhaugh, Ronald
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ABSTRACT

The Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organization is at a stage in its development when it must actively solicit contributions from a variety of disciplines: linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and education. While such an interdisciplinary approach to problems has its dangers, particularly when allied to the goal of social and political relevance in the actions that follow, it is the only appropriate approach for the 1970's. TESOL will develop best as an organization through fostering interdisciplinary endeavors, encouraging the socio-political concerns of its members, and being pragmatic and eclectic in the conduct of its professional affairs. (Author)

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TESOL: OUR COMMON CAUSE*

Ronald Wardhaugh
University of Michigan

The TESOL organization is at a stage in its development when it must actively solicit contributions from a variety of disciplines: linguistics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and education. While such an interdisciplinary approach to problems has its dangers, particularly when allied to the goal of social and political relevance in the actions that follow, it is the only appropriate approach for the 1970's. TESOL will develop best as an organization through fostering interdisciplinary endeavors, encouraging the socio-political concerns of its members, and being pragmatic and eclectic in the conduct of its professional matters.

The underlying theme of the plenary sessions of this 1972 convention is an examination of some of the major issues that confront us as an organization. This paper will attempt an overview of the total situation and the following papers will discuss that situation from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. The function of this paper is to raise various questions in a deliberate attempt to provoke some possible answers in the plenary session papers that will follow during the next two days. This paper will also express the belief that the problems and issues we face, though complicated, are far from insuperable. Indeed, the prospects for the future of our organization are every bit as bright now as they have ever been.

We should begin our task by asking several searching questions about the TESOL organization itself. How does this organization stand in 1972? Numerically, it is growing stronger every day, thanks to the energy of the membership, the elected officers, and the executive secretary. The enrollments at our conventions, particularly this one in Washington, the increase in membership both at home and abroad, the establishment of more than a dozen regional affiliates, and the rapidly growing list of valuable professional publications attest to our continued growth and developments. Today, the TESOL organization has a voice in the community of educators: it has come a remarkably long way in a very few years. However, that very growth has produced evidence of dangers of the kind that have bedeviled certain other organizations in recent years. What kind of organization

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best meets the needs of university professors and first-grade teachers, of minority group militants and representatives of the so-called 'establishment," of teachers of the foreign-born and teachers of native Americans, of researchers, administrators, community workers, counselors, and a complex array of other individuals? What is the common bond that can best hold together the members of such a heterogeneous group? What really unites us? A few years ago the zest of founding and developing a new organization held people together, but some of that particular zest has disappeared as the organization established itself. Today various differences and internal pressures have become apparent at our meetings. There are requests that the TESOL organization become active on behalf of one interest group or another, or that it take under its mantle most or all of bilingual or bidialectal education, however one defines these terms, or that it try to indicate exactly what kind of training a professional worker in TESOL should have, or that it become a society of applied linguistics. Some kind of response is necessary to these requests, but it is not always easy to reach agreement on what form that response should take.

One possible response would be to set about rather deliberately to reassess the purposes of the TESOL organization in order to formulate a mission for ourselves in the seventies. However, any such reassessment is particularly difficult right now because of the political, social, racial, and economic climate we as a nation find ourselves in. There is little doubt that we are living through a period of political unrest, social upheaval, racial conflict, and economic retrenchment, a period of concern with issues such as equality in employment, busing of children, the alienation of the young, and a crisis of purposefulness in society. Likewise, the admirable goal of cultural pluralism that so many of us seek for this society is hard to keep in sight at a time when so much fragmentation of that same society is apparent, when as Betty Robinett said on Saturday "the melting pot has become a seething cauldron."

Then, too, the academic world in which most of us work is filled with its own uncertainties: scholars in the different disciplines tend as usual to go their own separate ways, and classroom teachers find themselves pushed and pulled hither and thither as various interest and pressure groups compete for influence in public education. The problems and pressures are excruciatingly complex and our urge to respond to them is a healthy one, whether it be personal, professional, or organizational. To a large extent the responses we make must recognize realities we have tended to ignore and must result in social and political action. We should not draw back from making responses because they must have social and even political consequences.

Traditionally, workers in TESOL have looked to the academic world rather than to the world of social and political action for sources of inspiration and modes of action. The future must see us achieve a better balance between our use of these two worlds. Educational decisions are both academic and socio-political in nature. For that reason education is one of the most difficult of callings, since educators work with living, thinking human beings not with inert matter. And the more they seek to involve themselves with the lives of the people they serve the more they must involve themselves in the social and political decision-making processes of society. At this point then it would be well to look closely at the relationships of TESOL to a variety of disciplines so as to examine the nature of those relationships, particularly within a climate of social and political relevance.

First of all, we may ask what the traditional role of linguistics has been in second-language teaching and what contributions we can expect from linguistics in the future. It would be fair to say that linguistics has had a somewhat paradoxical place in second-language teaching. At one extreme, it has had a powerful influence among the prime-movers in such teaching, many of whom were trained in linguistics and even today teach linguistics. On the other hand, many classroom teachers give little evidence of much, or any, exposure to concepts deriving from linguistics. It is not

entirely unfair to say that many teachers of second languages do not know an allophone from a telephone, a grammatical transformation from an ecclesiastical reformation, or a sentence pattern from a holding pattern. This is a large deficiency in the knowledge of those teachers and a difficult one to remedy. However, there is one consolation: teaching a second language is different from teaching linguistics. Now that you will say is a truism--but it is a truism worth stating again: teaching a second language is different from teaching linguistics. Too many linguists have insisted that linguistics is just about all that language teachers need to know in order to do their jobs well. Consequently, much that has been written on the subject of language teaching is about certain linguistic aspects of language teaching, and relatively little is about learners, learning, and the variety of socio-cultural contexts in which learning goes on.

Linguistics has much to offer language teachers, but providing language teachers with a rigorous training in theoretical linguistics will go only so far in solving problems that exist in second-language instruction. We must frankly acknowledge that it is difficult to find much in current theoretical linguistics that has any direct bearing on language teaching as opposed to teaching about language. For example, deep structures, surface structures, systematic phonemes, transformational rules, linguistic universals, output conditions, derivational constraints, rule conspiracies, and even the competence-performance distinction are challenging concepts for linguists to discuss--and those concepts are what theoretical linguistics is all about these days--but their relevance to deciding how to teach a Puerto Rican child in New York to speak English or a black child in a ghetto in the same city to read is extremely tenuous.

At the very best there is considerable speculation; at the very worst there is assertion quite unsupported by fact. Theoretical linguistics is a very scholarly pursuit. The concerns of the leading linguistic theoreticians can best be appreciated by reading articles in such journals as Language, Linguistic Inquiry, and Foundations of Language. These concerns are very different from those of language teachers: they are much more narrow, much more abstract, and much more remote from the realities of daily existence. The really lasting contributions of linguistics to language teaching probably have more to do with attitudes toward language than with the latest trends in linguistic inquiry and analysis. And really these attitudes have not changed a great deal over the years. Linguists are united above all by their commitment to looking at language in as scientific a way as they possibly can, so linguistics is as much a set of attitudes of scientific inquiry as it is the particular body of linguistic knowledge that exists at any one time. It is the attitudes as much as the knowledge that need to be stressed in the language component of teacher training in English-as-a-second-language programs. It is the beliefs and attitudes which unite linguists that will prove to be most helpful to language teachers. Unfortunately, it is those beliefs and attitudes which separate linguists that have tended to gain most publicity and that have even deterred some people from becoming involved in considering possible linguistic contributions to language teaching.

When linguists look at an educational problem, they tend to see it through the conditioning imposed by their training. In so reacting, they are probably no different from other specialists: orthodontists probably look every one straight in the teeth, optometrists between and

across the eyes, and barbers from the brow right over the top of the head. A person's training and upbringing necessarily predispose him toward a particular world-view. How then do linguists typically react to the fact that people speak English differently in different places and in different circumstances? They react by fitting the differences they perceive into the framework of something they call dialectology, and then they sometimes proclaim that the major problem that exists is one of modifying a particular dialect or adding a new dialect. Here, for example, is one statement (Cannon, 1971) of such a viewpoint being attributed to linguists:

> ...most linguists agree that underprivileged blacks are native English speakers who need command of an additional dialect which will permit them to be accepted socially.

If the statement is correct—and there is good reason to believe that if is--it means that certain linguists assume that what some black children require in order to speak like some white children is direct instruction in a standard dialect. This solution derives from their way of looking at the problem. But the solution is just too narrow to withstand serious examination. The problem is far more complicated than such linguists have perceived it to be, for the linguistic component in the problem is only one of many components, and possibly not even the most important. Linguistics is not a panacea capable of removing language differences or a remedy for cultural differences in learning, for racial bigotry, or for economic inequality. We must focus our attention on those components of the problem too, not just on the linguistic one alone. We should ask ourselves why any child should become bidialectal, and also why any child should learn to read. We really must be prepared to ask whether bidialectalism is actually an

achieveable goal in our society. And even if bidialectalism is achieveable, we must ask ourselves whether it will have the racial and social consequences hoped for it by some. Will blacks really find equality with whites if they learn to speak like whites? Will books written in nonstandard English induce a desire to read in children who may see little or no value in learning to read, indeed who may even find reading to be dysfunctional in the sense that success in reading will alienate them from peers and other acquaintances? Such success may mean for them that in Thomas Wolfe's words "you can't go home again," but at the same time you have nowhere else to go. Those of you who work with minority groups will recognize this phenomenon. It is certainly a well documented phenomenon in the literature of the dispossessed and uprooted. We must fit the linguistic factors involved in working with speakers of nonstandard dialects into a pattern that contains <u>all</u> the other relevant factors: cultural, racial, economic, and political. Only by doing so can we hope to achieve a valid perspective on the total problem and some glimpses of possible modes of action. To look at the linguistic factors alone is to eliminate any possibility of ever seeing the problem as a whole and of acting effectively.

We need a greater linguistic contribution at the classroom level of instruction and less linguistic imperialism at the level of research and development. Linguistic theory is important in making decisions concerning language teaching, but relatively little is to be gained in actual second-language teaching in the pursuit of the more esoteric aspects of such theory. However, much is to be gained from the basic understandings about language shared by all linguists, from an interest in theory itself, and from the open-

mindedness that so often accompanies such an interest. Dwight Bolinger (1968) has written that "language teaching is not linguistics, any more than medicine is chemistry." He is right: linguistic knowledge is very relevant to our concerns in language teaching, but such knowledge must be thoroughly integrated with contributions from disciplines other than linguistics and with an awareness that language teaching is not the exclusive domain of any single discipline. By thorough integration too I mean more than trying to embrace psychological and sociological variables through the development of hyphenated disciplines like psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics. Neither of these hyphenated disciplines has yet developed the comprehensiveness required to make more than a small contribution to second-language teaching.

The second discipline which has traditionally contributed to language teaching is psychology. Perhaps the greatest contribution of psychology to language teaching has been in increasing the general awareness in such areas as individual differences and human growth and development and with the development of various kinds of tests and measurements. Innovations and ideas from these areas have been on the whole much more influential than innovations and ideas from learning theory. Psychologists, of course, have long been involved with problems of learning: rats learning how to get through mazes; dogs how to salivate on cue; pigeons how to peck out rhythms; freshmen students how to memorize various kinds of nonsense syllables; and so on. The findings of learning psychologists are very useful if one's interests are exhausted by the behaviors of rats, dogs, pigeons, and college freshmen. But there is remarkably little evidence that such research has produced any great effects on actual classroom instruction. However, some very useful notions from learning theory have affected the way we look at learners. For example, children are sometimes acknowledged to be complex, little-understood beings

far different from rats; learning is seen as being multifaceted and influenced by all kinds of variables; and an occasional psychologist admits that his concerns and those of his colleagues are not always relevant to problems of describing the kind of learning that takes place in a complex social setting. And, of course, second-language learning is extremely complex. Those of you who are familiar with the work of Scherer and Wertheimer (1964) in a college setting, or with the Pennsylvania Project in a large public school setting (Smith, 1970), or with the work that graduate students do for doctoral dissertations know how complex is the problem of investigating any kind of sustained learning of a foreign language in actual classrooms. Some of you are also aware of the subtle interplay of cultural grouping and psychological characteristics, that in fact there is a social-psychology of language learning as well as a psychology of language learning, in other words that the process of learning is not the same everywhere, varying as it does from culture to culture and within cultures among different sub-cultures.

There are hopeful signs that findings relevant to work in our classrooms are beginning to emerge from the work of psychologists who acknowledge the complexities of learning. In particular, we must single out the talk John Carroll (1971) gave to this organization a year ago in New Orleans. In that talk Carroll strongly emphasized the importance of understanding student goals in learning and the teacher's ability to manage learning in accordance with those goals. Also worthy of mention are some of the writings of Leon Jakobovits (1970). As much as anyone else in recent years, Jakobovits has attempted to integrate the findings of psychological research into the practical business of teaching foreign

languages. There is also a renewed interest in early childhood education and an acknowledgment of the critical importance of the early-childhood period in the life of every child. However, certain signs of growing academic obfuscation in that area are also apparent, as is a deplorable tendency to import an institution--in this case the British infant school--to solve a pressing educational problem here in the United States.

This last comment on institutional transplanting leads quite properly to considerations of contributions from a third set of relevant disciplines, in this case the disciplines of anthropology and sociology. Typically, we neglect possible contributions from anthropology and sociology in language teaching. Very likely not more than a handful of professional anthropologists and sociologists are here in this audience today, and it may even be difficult for some of us to understand what kind of contribution such professionals can make to language teaching. We may believe that anthropologists study primitive or exotic peoples: their customs, mores, and rites. We may not consider ourselves to be either primitive or exotic and consequently assume that we are not proper subjects for anthropological research. Sociologists probe into such areas as marriage, the church, the political establishment, life in Suburbsville, and family living patterns. We may also ask what is the relevance of their probings to language teaching. In one sense, our society is also a primitive or exotic society, just as is every society. We too can well afford to look objectively at our crowded urban anthills, our patterns of pot-smoking and pop-listening, our child-rearing practices, our institutions, our cults, our myths, and our folklore. What was good enough for Bronislaw Malinowski's Trobriand Islanders (1935) and Margaret Mead's natives of New Guinea (1962) may well be good enough for the res-

idents of Evanston, Illinois, Jackson, Mississippi; Orange County, California; and New York City's Harlem. Perhaps we may find out a great deal that is relevant to our various concerns in language teaching. We may find out what initiates and controls learning in the different subcultures out of which our culture is composed. We can scarcely afford to do less if we do indeed believe in the goal of cultural and linguistic pluralism.

In this connection we may well ask once more the two questions asked earlier: Why should any child learn a second dialect? Why should any child learn to read? And to these questions we can add a third: Why should anyone, child or adult, learn a second language? Full answers to these questions can be obtained only if we seek help from anthropologists and sociologists so as to come to some understanding of the value systems that prevail in different subcultures, or the different patterns of acculturation and behavior, and of the complexities that exist within our own society. We who are concerned with language instruction must recognize that learning and teaching does not go on within either a linguistic or a psychological vacuum. It goes on in a complex social setting in which many powerful variables operate: community expectancy; child self-image; teacher role; and complex and little understood systems of rewards and punishments which vary widely from group to group.

There are some healthy signs that we are beginning to seek the help of anthropologists and sociologists and to ask some of the questions that must be asked, and even to attempt a few tentative answers. On the subject of bidialectalism for example, William Labov, a linguist who is very much aware of the need for linguists to interact with anthro-

pologists and sociologists, has written the following about the value systems that are involved (Labov, 1971):

> From all that I have said so far, it should be evident that cognitive and structural factors play a role in the evolution of language and the difficulties that people have in holding on to their older language or acquiring new ones. But these factors are not sufficient to account for the major social problems of communication and for linguistic divergence. In particular, success or failure in communicating across social groups, between Black and white, is controlled primarily by the social values ascribed to language. Success in learning to read or speak a foreign language may be fostered by analyzing carefully the cognitive and structural processes involved...and yet research generally points to the fact that the massive reading failure we observe in the inner cities is primarily the result of cultural and political conflict. Language differences are important as the conscious or unconscious symbols of that conflict. It is increasingly evident that we can explore and understand such value systems.

Labov has also demonstrated how important the peer group is as a social influence on the learning of preadolescents and how patterns of social mobility influence certain kinds of language learning. Joshua Fishman (1971) has done similar interesting work, particularly with the varieties of Spanish and English spoken by Puerto Ricans in New York and Wallace Lambert (1967) with Anglo-French bilingualism in Montreal. The investigations of Ulf Hannerz (1969) into life styles in a Washington, D.C. ghetto is also an excellent example of the kind of work that is being done. Hannerz's work is probably as relevant to second-dialect teaching as any work done by a linguist, yet too few educators and linguists are aware of its existence.

We cannot leave anthropology and sociology, particularly in its connection with ideas about bidialectalism, without a quotation from that linguistic iconoclast James Sledd. Sledd is a linguist who recognizes some of the limitations of linguistics in providing solutions to educational problems. Partly for that reason his views have not always been welcome. He also happens to write in a way that is unambiguous, stating his views without equivocation and with certain rhetorical

flourishes of his own. Note, however, the relevance of the following words to what has just been said:

> The best description of all our kinds of English would still not be enough to make coercive bidialectalism a success. The English teacher's forty-five minutes a day for five days a week will never counteract the influence, and sometimes the hostility, of playmates and friends and family during much the larger part of the student's time. Formal education could produce real bidialectals only in a vast system of state nurseries and boarding schools to which the children of the poor and ignorant would be consigned at an early age; but such establishments would be prohibitively expensive, intolerable to people, and still not absolutely certain of success, because the essential of all conditions might not be met--namely the desire of the children to talk like the white middle class.

No one person has a monopoly on solutions, because no one person has a grasp of all the issues. We must seek to involve anthropologists and sociologists in the search for solutions to our problems. We must continue to foster that involvement, for the results cannot but be beneficial to everyone concerned, a point that Allan Grimshaw (1966) has made before.

After considering linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology, we turn to education and to the contribution of the educator. The contribution from education is placed last because it is the most difficult to discuss. Partly this is so because by its nature it is a somewhat undisciplined contribution. It is characterized more by action and reaction to issues which surface periodically than by sustained effort. One of the weaknesses of education, of course, is that educators must draw on the pure disciplines and are made to feel that "education" is somehow an inferior calling because it is an "applied" field not a "theoretical" one. Therefore, it tends to be in low repute in academic circles, a circumstance which possibly reflects more on what academics fail to do than on what educators attempt to do.

Any hesitancy that the TESOL organization may experience in deciding how to act is only the hesitancy of education in general writ small in the case of the TESOL organization. We have done an

excellent job so far in and through our organization. The success of TESOL is apparent. If we feel unsure of ourselves, it is almost entirely for reasons largely beyond our control: community pressures; lack of financial and professional resources; physical, social, and academic intimidation; and the sheer weight of numbers that we must deal with every day. These factors affect everyone in public education. The surprising fact then is that we can point with pride to so much success in our own brief history.

It may be well at this point to look a little more closely at how we characteristically deal with pressures in public education. One way is to spend money in the hope that failure will somehow disappear. Consequently, we begin crash programs for this and brief research programs for that. The result has been responses such as the War on Poverty and the Right to Read. We must ask who really gains from responses such as these. Teachers gain with their institutes and summer stipends; consultants gain with their travel and their honoraria; schools gain with their dust-gathering equipment; the airlines gain; and the bosses and administrators of various kinds gain. But the poor are probably just as many, just as poor, and just as hungry and bitter. There seem to have been very few gains among the poor. Most of the children who could not read still cannot read, and are still unemployable and frustrated. Here, too, any gain score is probably very low. The answer to educational problems does not lie in spending millions and millions of dollars every fiscal year to finance stop-gap measures. Such money should be spent instead on alleviating the causes of poverty and ignorance, and on comprehensive long-term programs designed to eradicate crime and disease, and not on buying off militants, bolstering patronage, providing expensive junkets, funding interminable conferences, and producing papers for

journals that should never have seen a first issue. We need such alleviation and such long-term programs, but let us note that this advocacy has political as well educational consequences. However, a nation that has spent more than twenty billion dollars on sending a few men to the moon and many more billions on a vicious war in Asia, and continues to spend great amounts to maintain repressive political and social systems throughout the world together with a vast military establishment, but still tolerates poverty, ignorance, crime, and disease on a massive scale at home--even in its own capital city--has its sense of values upside-down. The kind of educational responses we must make cannot avoid a request for reordering national priorities. As educators we must meet some of the pressures we face by requesting money, but we must be careful to see that such money is spent well rather than spent selfishly on ends that suit us rather than for the good of those we seek to serve.

We who work in education are also faced with pressures from advocates of all kinds of persuasions. Today we live in what I would call the age of advocacy, an age in which rewards go to those who shout hardest or who control the media. We must therefore learn to respond in a way which shows that while we recognize the existence of legitimate points of view, we will not be swayed by sheer advocacy-for-the-hell-of-it or accept something as being true merely because "X" or "Y" says it is true. We must also resist the tendency to devalue the intellectual response in favor of the visceral or the gut response alone. If we are able to solve the problems we have in society in general and in language instruction in particular, we are going to have to listen to what people are really saying to each other and to evaluate ideas on their merits and not by irrelevant characteristics of the advocates. Nonsense is non-

sense no matter whose mouth it comes out of. There is certainly enough of it to go around, so let us label it as such when we hear it or when we read it. And let us not be taken in by the big lie either! We must sort out and evaluate the competing pressures as well as the competing priorities in our society.

If we insist that money be spent wisely and if we listen for good ideas, we can find much that is useful in the classrooms. Teachers learn a lot from teaching. Classrooms are wonderful places for testing ideas, and countless fine things go on in them. The ideal educational environment is one in which theoretical insights from the academic disciples are matched with the practical experiences of the educators. Teachers should not be just mere consumers of ideas: they must be testers, adaptors, engineers, even architects. Theory and practice must proceed hand in hand: one cannot insist on leading the other.

So far this paper has been mainly concerned with some of the problems we face as an organization, but it has also indicated a number of prospects. One further prospect is of achieving a new synthesis of ideas in second-language teaching in the not-too-distant future. We need such a synthesis, and there are signs that it is on its way now that linguists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and educators are beginning to talk to each other in meetings and conventions such as this. Out of some of the talk should come choices and options for the future. The synthesis that emerges must certainly be quite unlike those that existed before in that respect alone, for in allowing choices and options it must eschew the monolithic nature of certain previous syntheses.

We must also learn to ask good questions of each other as we discuss our mutual problems, for good questions produce answers that we can work with for years, and bad questions lead us nowhere. We must ask linguists to tell us how their concerns are relevant to ours, and how their grammars and rules relate to language as it is used by real people for the purposes of meaningful communication. We must therefore rekindle in them an interest in linguistic performance, in what Saussure called parole as opposed to langue. Happily, there are signs of such an interest, particularly in the work of William Labov. We must ask psychologists to demonstrate to us how boys and girls are alike and different from dogs and pigeons in the ways they learn. We must ask sociologists and anthropologists to describe to us how the educational process works in various sociocultural settings, particularly in those settings in which we educators experience our greatest difficulties and most agonizing frustrations. We must ask educators to explain how anybody ever succeeds in teaching anything of value to anyone, that is, to enumerate the total array of factors that influence successful teaching and learning. These requests are startling in their simplicity of phrasing, but they are formidable in their demands of the various disciplines.

As previously mentioned, the problems we face are exceedingly complicated, and the knowledge we have in any and every area is often little better than fragmentary. Solutions will demand a concerted effort from many different kinds of people. No one has a corner on solutions just because he is a linguist, a psychologist, a black, a woman, a minority-group militant, a professor, or an anything else. We must also be prepared to label gratuitous solutions for what they are. Solutions to complex problems are most likely to be found when a variety of expertise

is drawn on, and when those who are involved with the problems approach them with caution, rather than when one advocate, one expert, or one discipline appears to preempt all other possible inputs. Our prospects for the future are good if we remember this caution, and this convention can mark a new turning point for the TESOL organization if we do indeed heed it.

Our TESOL organization really has no choice but to become more consciously interdisciplinary than it has been and to encourage participation in its deliberations and conventions of practitioners from a wide variety of disciplines. It has no choice but to become broadly catholic. It cannot become just a society for applied linguistics, or simply a lobby for bilingual education, or merely a pressure group for a particular kind of bidialectal instruction. These options are much too narrow and quite out of keeping with the demands the 1970's will make on us.

We must each of us listen to the other person. We must seek for a wide range of viewpoints to be represented whenever we meet, and we must see to it that our TESOL organization makes available a coherent structure so that all may be heard. The program of this 1972 convention is an important first step in the right direction. The perils inherent in interdisciplinary organizations are many, just as they are many in any organizational involvement in practical and socio-political matters. Many of us know that in the academic world it is usually safer and more prestigious to write a critical article on a poem than to write a poem, to analyze a short story at several levels of meaning than to write a publishable short story, to teach linguistics than to teach a foreign language, and to analyze the political views of some seventeenth century political nonentity than to seek office on the local school board. Consequently, it will not be easy to further the interdisciplinary cause and at the same time maintain academic

respect, but what is called for is a different relationship between the academic and socio-polical worlds than has existed heretofore.

We must also be pragmatic in what we do--or eclectic if you prefer that term. Again, there may be some reluctance to work without having articles of faith to fall back on when the world does not seem to behave as it should. That's what articles of faith are for--to straighten up that babbling buzzing confusion that is the real world. But the alternatives seem quite clear: either you buy a system that probably should never have been marketed or you continue to search for improvements to what has worked for you. The first way backs you up sooner or later into an untenable situation, tied to beliefs and practices which slowly strangle and consume. The second way you stay alive, viable, human, and in a real sense, intellectually honest. You do not sell your birthright to either structural linguistics or transformational linguistics, to either behavioristic psychology or cognitive psychology, to either racism or masochism. Pragmatists, eclecticists, synthesizers share the common characteristic of being willing to ask new questions, to try fresh ideas, and to keep options open. This is the road to growth and progress, the road that cannot be "not taken." To some extent we need a moratorium on methods just as we need a moratorium on subscribing to particular positions in the various disciplines. Such positions are pleasurable to hold and maintain intellectually in those rare moments of leisure when we can retire to the ivory-tower, but as members of an organization looking for relevance and purpose in the Seventies, we cannot allow ourselves much such indulgence when the demands are so heavy.

We should lay to a rest for a while the single method, whether it is grammar-translation, audiolingual, linguistic, or what have you. We must take what good we find in any method. We must look to a variety of lin-

guistic contributions, for all wisdom does not reside on the banks of the Charles, on the West Coast, or in Ann Arbor, or anywhere else. Neither can we be dogmatic behaviorists nor dogmatic cognitivists. Our mission is to help people learn languages when they want to learn languages, to initiate learning when that seems desirable, and to maintain learning once learning has begun. These are problems enough for any group of people no matter how talented and no matter how dedicated. Our mission is not to win converts to a new creed, is not to smear the intellectual opposition, and certainly is not to dazzle our colleagues and students with our brilliance. We must take what works wherever we find it, and we must seek to find reasons for both the successes and the failures we have. The teacher himself must become an active inquirer, a synthesizer, and above all a learner.

Lastly, given the important goal we have of wanting to understand why learning occurs and what influences and maintains successful learning, we must place our trust in intelligence and reason, characteristics that seem to have gone out of style in an era of expedience and whim. However, if we are to take education seriously, we must bring them back into style. Nonsense must be identified for what it is, irrelevancy must be so labeled, self-seeking must be counteracted, emotionalism must be transcended, and reason must prevail. The alternative is to flounder in a sea of ignorance, emotion, and whim.

Our TESOL organization has considerable and varied strengths that we can identify. It contains a wealth of talent and experience some of which is underused or bypassed for a variety of reasons. The tasks we face are urgent,and the time for action is now, not tomorrow. We must seek professional unity through professional diversity, we must look to promote the achievement of our students through drawing eclectically from many sources, and we must define our central purposes through wide consultation.

In doing all these things, we must reject emotion, self-seeking, and special pleading. Not to do so means that we all lose: black children and white, the native-born and the foreign-born, linguists and educators, administrators and parents, every one of us. With faith in the process of education and a large degree of humility in the face of the face of the complexity of the situation we find ourselves in, perhaps we can move in the direction of a better life for all in which cultural and linguistic pluralism are highly valued and therefore realistic attainable goals. And with a willingness to consult widely and to listen to a variety of viewpoints, perhaps the TESOL organization can show other professional and educational organizations a viable way of turning away from the irrelevancies which so often preoccupy them toward dealing meaningfully with urgent human and social problems. For it is above all this admirable urge to find solutions to such problems that brings us here today and unites us in this TESOL organization in our common cause, a cause which none of us can afford to see fail.

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